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NSC BRIEFING 8 April 1954

CHINESE COMMUNIST CAPABILITIES FOR DIRECT INTERVENTION IN INDOCHINA

I. Re ground forces there two Chinese armies (30,000 men each) immediately adjacent Tonkin border. [been there 2 yrs]

A. 300 miles from border there are seven more armies.

B. No movement these armies toward Indochina in many months.

C. No change ground strength this area over a year.

D. Units this area not engaged anti-guerrilla operations.

OGA review completed

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E. Estimated Chinese can support eight armies (240,000 men) in Indochina (G-2, 3 Apr 54) and could overrun Tonkin with a force of 50-75,000 men, together with Viet Minh troops, against French resistance alone.

II. Tho these units being re-equipped with modern material, there no indication priority over other areas.

A. Present coverage inadequate determine whether supply dumps for operational support of large Chinese ground force been accumulated opposite Indochina.

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III. Road network into Tonkin from China via Langson, Caobang, Hagiang, Laokay, and Laichau adequate support movement of sufficient forces to overrun Tonkin.

[redacted]

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IV. Chinese air force has more than enough modern aircraft take control air over Tonkin away from the French. However, there not much strength near Indochina border now.

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[redacted]

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A. Military air unit closest to Indochina located Liuchow, 280 miles northeast of Hanoi; this an understrength LA-11 piston fighter division (10 aircraft engaged basic training). This division may be converting to MIG-15's.

B. At Canton 500 miles from Hanoi, there an overstrength (80 aircraft) and combat-trained MIG-15 division. Next closest MIG-15 unit is at Nanchang, 650 miles northeast Indochina.

C. Closest known bomber unit is an untested TU-2 division (radius, 500 miles) at Changsha, 500 miles northeast Indochina border.

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V. What kind air facilities do Chinese have near border?

A. At least three airfields are within 100 miles of Indochina border, all with short or unimproved runways, now in use, but only by civilian transports.

Posch Manning Switch

B. Any or all of these possibly could be used for limited periods both by jets and by conventional fighters and conventional light bombers.

C. Within MIG-15 combat radius (315 miles) of border there several additional large airfields, present condition of which unknown.

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VI. Within past six months Chinese are building major air base at Suichi on Leichow peninsula (just north Hainan Island).

A. This field's runway (planned for 10,000 feet and 6,000 feet complete), now capable handling any aircraft in use by Chinese with possible exception of TU-4 medium bombers.

B. There been no indication which CCAF units will move Suichi, hence no information on its primary use.

VII. Though many reports state Viet Minh pilots training with Chinese, this not substantiated.

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VIII. None of airfields in Viet Minh territory operable.

A. Without major effort at rehabilitation, carried out in face of French bombing, these fields cannot be put condition for use by Chinese.

IX. [redacted]

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X. Chinese Navy not capable defeating French naval forces Tonkin Gulf.

A. Long as French naval, air forces operating Tonkin Gulf, Chinese attempt invade Indochina by sea would be costly.

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B. There no evidence of junk concentration sufficient carry important number troops Indo-china been built up.

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